of the latter bird in the Leyden Museum advises me that the two species are not the same.

20. Neopus malayensis, Everett, t. c. p. 181.

21. Turtur tigrina, Everett, t. c. 193.

22. Bambusicola erythrophrys, Sharpe : Everett, t. c. p. 200.

My name is a little unfortunate for this species, as it seems to get a black head, and the rufous eyebrow disappears. This is seen in a beautiful adult male sent by Mr. Everett.

VII. *Description of the Nest and Eggs of* Staphidia everetti.

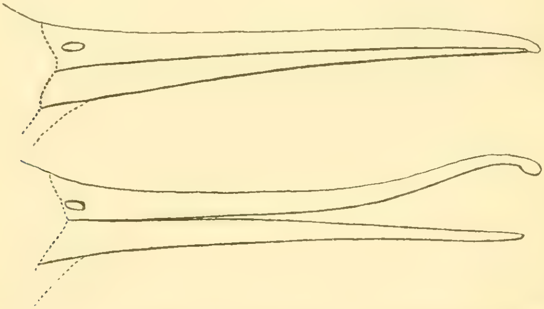
This nest, which was procured by Mr. Everett at Matang in Feb. 1892, is a good-sized cup-shaped structure, made almost entirely of fibres, with an external covering of fine rootlets and moss, with a few dead leaves interwoven. The eggs are white, thickly mottled and spotted with reddish brown, particularly at the larger end; the underlying spots are dark grey and very distinct. Axis 0·73 inch, diam. 0·55.

XLIX.—*On the Mechanism of the Upper Mandible in the* Scolopacidæ. By R. W. Shufeldt, M.D., C.M.Z.S.

Mr. W. P. Pycraft contributes a very interesting article, "On a Point in the Mechanism of the Bill in Birds," to 'The Ibis' for July 1893, and I am thankful to him for a copy of it which I have recently received.

Mr. Pycraft in that communication very well describes the peculiar power that the Dunlin (*Tringa alpina*) possesses of elevating the distal extremity of the superior mandible. I am inclined to believe that any true Scolopacine bird can voluntarily accomplish the same act at any time. Upon several occasions I have observed the performance of the feat in Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*), and there can be no doubt but what the achievement, taken in connection with the extreme sensitiveness of the end of the upper beak in these birds, enables them to both quickly detect and *seize* their food in the soft ooze wherein they probe for it.

My friend Mr. Gurdon Trumbull has very accurately described the act performed by the Woodcock *, and he says that "I had heard from Dr. S., who secured this Woodcock for me, that he and his friend Mr. B. had seen the bird turn up the end of its upper mandible in a very peculiar and inexplicable manner. I was urged to watch carefully for a repetition of the occurrence. At the time I paid but little attention to the statement,—I was watching for so many other events; but while carrying my bird out into the country that last day of its confinement my friend's remark was most vividly recalled. I was holding the bird in my hand with a handkerchief around him, covering all but the bill, when suddenly, as he was making one of his frequent struggles to get away, I saw that the upper mandible was thrown upward as I have represented it in the lower outline of the accompanying woodcut.



Elevation of the end of the upper mandible in the American Woodcock (*Philohela minor*). After Trumbull.

"For an instant I thought that the bird must have met with an accident in some way, but as I touched the lifted mandible it was lowered to the usual position. Twice more during my walk he threw up the mandible in the same fashion, and each time I held him directly in front of my eyes and studied most carefully the exact curvature. There was no 'dilation,' nor any change of form other than that which I describe. He once held the bill in this strange position for nearly, if not quite, half a minute.

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* 'Forest and Stream,' vol. xxxv. No. 21. New York, Dec. 11, 1890, p. 412.

"After liberating my captive and reaching home, I immediately procured a Woodcock that had been recently killed, and found that I could easily curve its mandible into the precise position into which my live bird could curve his own at will."

In the future it will be both interesting and important to ascertain which of all the *Limicolæ* have this power. I doubt if any of the typical Plovers can perform the act, or the Curlews, or the Phalaropes, or the Avocets and Stilts. About the Godwits (*Limosa*) there might be a doubt, and it may be that it will be found to be confined to the true Snipes and Sandpipers or the typical "probers" among the Scolopacidæ. Of course, no such power would be of any use to the Oyster-catchers (*Hæmatopus*), and I do not know about *Aphriza*. The development of such a power among these birds, in the history of the group, can easily be imagined, and requires nothing from me here. Its advantage is also quite apparent—an advantage very similar to that possessed by the new pattern of bullet-forceps over the old style of that surgical instrument, permitting as it does *sudden* seizure at the *distal* extremity, and extraction without a parting of the entire continuity of the jaws.

This peculiar mechanism of the beak of Scolopacine birds I believe to be worthy of more extended research on the part of biologists; and, indeed, there should be nothing of that kind considered to be beneath their notice. A thorough comprehension of the affinities and natural taxonomy of the Class Aves will require on our part a *full* knowledge of everything that in any way pertains to them. We cannot afford to overlook any "point" whatever, and it devolves upon each and all of us to contribute to the common stock of information whenever the opportunity affords. This being so, Mr. Pycraft's observation upon *Tringa alpina* is of importance, notwithstanding the fact that it has been previously described, by an American naturalist, for a bird belonging to the same group.